

ASSURANCES *of*
SALVATION

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There is a minimum of truth without which a person cannot be saved. This is the gospel.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

Here is the basic truth of the gospel:

- 1) Who Jesus is—He is the Christ.
- 2) Christ died for our sins according to the scripture.
- 3) He was buried. His burial did two things:
 - It confirmed His death. He was dead *and buried*.
 - It confirmed His resurrection.
- 4) He was raised on the third day according to the scripture.

This is the truth that saves. Believing any less than this will not result in salvation.

1: It is possible to know that you are saved.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

1 John was written so that you may know that you have eternal life. Do you want to know? Read the letter twice. Then go through it a third time and mark every occurrence of the word “know.” It will show up with two

different meanings, but mark them all. Each verse will tell you how you can know that you have eternal life.

2: The Holy Spirit is a means of knowing.

We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:16-17)

God's Spirit talks to our spirit to tell us that we belong to Him. We are His children. I cannot explain it, but to those to whom this has happened it does not need explaining.

The Holy Spirit is the present guarantee of our final salvation, the resurrection of our bodies:

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with **a seal, the promised Holy Spirit**, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

*Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the **Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come**. (2 Corinthians 5:5)*

We either have the Spirit or we do not have the Spirit. Whoever does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ. He is not a Christian. He is not saved.

*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ**. (Romans 8:9)*

*...those who are led by the **Spirit of God** are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)*

Have you been led by the Spirit? That is supernatural guidance. If you have not been led by the Spirit or if you have and do not recognize it, you should wonder if you are saved.

*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. **The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.** The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:11-16)*

The natural man may be a genius, but unless he has the Spirit of God, the Word of God is foolishness to him.

3: Change of character

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

If this list describes your normal state, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

If this describes you, you are saved. Jesus saves out of the first list into the second list. If you find yourself in both lists, it is for one of the following reasons.

- 1) You are mistaking natural personality traits for part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is not. The fruit of the Spirit is the characteristics of God given to a person when he is saved.
- 2) You are saved, but are deliberately choosing to go back into the first list. Confess and forsake it right now.
- 3) You are naturally in the first list, but faking the second list. That is, you are a hypocrite. You are not saved.

Jesus Christ saves us out of the first list into the second list.

4: Confessing Jesus as Lord

Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

This confession is not a matter of the mouth only. People who do not have the evidence of the Holy Spirit say it in liturgies all of the time.

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45)

5: Obedience

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6)

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who

the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:9-10)

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. (1 John 5:18)

We know we are saved because we are no longer living in sin. If it looks like we are living in sin, then there is no reason for others to know that we are Christians, and no reason for us to, either.

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. (1 John 2:3)

Obedience is not the means of salvation; it is an evidence of our salvation. Are you obedient?

6: Discipline

If obedience is a means of knowing that you know the Lord, what happens when you disobey?

*And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? **If you are not disciplined** (and everyone undergoes discipline), **then you are illegitimate children** and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5-11)*

God does not discipline those who are not His children. If you are getting away with disobedience, you are not a child of God. If you are being disciplined, pay attention and repent. It is evidence that you are saved.

7: Loving Christians

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. (1 John 3:14)

Christians love non-Christians. Non-Christians love non-Christians. It takes a Christian to love a Christian.

In her autobiography, *Climbing*, Rosalind Goforth tells of an elderly man who was unsure of his salvation. He said, “I wanted to convince myself all these years that I’m going to heaven, but I can’t.” She asked him if he loved the Lord’s people. He said, “Oh, it’s my greatest joy in life to be with the Lord’s people on the Lord’s day singing the Lord’s praises.” Then she pointed out 1 John 3:14 to him: “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.” Love for the brothers is evidence of salvation.

Consider the opposite. Suppose you brought a non-Christian to church. He would not feel comfortable. He might admire and respect Christians, but he wouldn’t love them like they love each other. He cannot. Jesus said that the pagans love pagans and that Christians are to love pagans; but it takes a *Christian* to love a Christian.

When you love other Christians, not only do you know that you are saved—everyone else also knows:

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)

8: Loving Enemies

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you

expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

9: Jesus said so

I tell you the truth; whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)

Notice the present tense: hears my word, believes in Him who sent me, has eternal life. Notice the future tense: will not be condemned. Notice the past tense: he has crossed over from death to life.

